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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the implementation of the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/184 of 23 December 1994.

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ANNEX

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the implementation of the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education

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# I. BACKGROUND

1. The question of the proclamation of a decade for human rights education has been discussed at several sessions of the General Assembly and of the Commission on Human Rights. In March 1993, the Commission on Human Rights 1/ recommended that the General Assembly take appropriate measures to declare a decade for human rights education, following the recommendations of the International Congress on Education and Democracy organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Centre for Human Rights in Montreal, Canada, in March 1993.

## A. World Conference on Human Rights

2. At the World Conference on Human Rights, convened in Vienna in June 1993, the issue of human rights education was a major point of discussion at all stages of the preparatory process as well as during the Conference. In its Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, 2/ the Conference reaffirmed that, in accordance with international instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, States were obligated to ensure that education was aimed at strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Education should promote understanding, tolerance, peace and friendly relations among nations, and all racial or religious groups, as well as encourage the development of United Nations activities in pursuance of those objectives.

3. The World Conference declared that human rights education, training and public information were essential for stable and harmonious relations among communities. It called on States to aim at eradicating illiteracy, to direct education towards the development of the individual and to strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It also recommended that human rights, humanitarian law, democracy and the rule of law should be included as subjects in all formal and informal learning institutions.

4. The World Conference further recommended that States develop specific programmes and strategies to ensure widespread human rights education and the dissemination of public information, taking into account the World Plan of Action on Education for Human Rights and Democracy adopted at Montreal in March 1993, and particularly the human rights needs of women. Intergovernmental organizations, national institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were called upon to assist Governments in those tasks.

5. In addition, the World Conference called for strengthening of the current World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights carried out by the United Nations. The advisory services and technical assistance programmes of the United Nations system should be able to respond immediately to requests from States for educational and training activities in the field of human rights, as well as provide for the special training of groups such as military forces and law enforcement and health personnel. Finally, the World Conference stated that the proclamation of a United Nations decade for human rights education should be

considered in order to promote, encourage and focus the above-mentioned educational activities.

## B. General Assembly: forty-ninth session

6. Pursuant to the suggestion made by the World Conference, the General Assembly, in its resolution 49/184 of 23 December 1994, proclaimed the 10-year period beginning on 1 January 1995 the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, and welcomed the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995-2004 contained in the report of the Secretary-General. 3/ The Assembly invited Governments to submit comments, with a view to supplementing the Plan of Action, and requested the Secretary-General to submit proposals for that purpose, taking into account the views expressed by Governments.

7. The General Assembly also appealed to all Governments to contribute to the implementation of the Plan of Action and to step up their efforts to eradicate illiteracy and to direct education towards the full development of the human personality and the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Assembly urged governmental and non-governmental educational agencies to intensify their efforts to establish and implement programmes of human rights education, as recommended in the Plan of Action, in particular by preparing and implementing national plans for human rights education. It further requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to coordinate the implementation of the Plan of Action.

8. In the same resolution, the General Assembly invited the specialized agencies and United Nations programmes to contribute, within their respective spheres of competence, to the implementation of the Plan of Action. It further called upon a wide range of NGOs and others to increase their involvement in formal and non-formal education in human rights, and requested the existing human rights monitoring bodies to place emphasis on the implementation by Member States of their international obligation to promote human rights education.

9. The Assembly requested the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat and the Commission on Human Rights, in cooperation with Member States, human rights treaty-monitoring bodies, other appropriate bodies and competent NGOs, to support efforts of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to coordinate the Plan of Action; and requested the Secretary-General to bring the resolution to the attention of all members of the international community and to intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with human rights and education. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to consider establishing a voluntary fund for human rights education, with special provision for the support of the human rights education activities of NGOs, to be administered by the Centre for Human Rights.

## C. Commission on Human Rights: fifty-first session

10. At its fifty-first session, in resolution 1995/47 of 3 March 1995, the Commission on Human Rights called upon all Governments to contribute, in

cooperation with NGOs, educators and the media, to the implementation of the Plan of Action and in particular to consider the establishment of a national focal point for human rights education, the development of an action-oriented national plan for human rights education and the creation of a national resource and training centre for human rights education, as envisaged in the Plan of Action; Governments were also invited to transmit to the High Commissioner for Human Rights comments with a view to supplementing the Plan of Action, and the Commission requested the High Commissioner to submit at its fifty-second session his proposals for supplementing the Plan of Action, taking into account the views submitted by Governments.

11. The Commission further requested the High Commissioner, with the assistance of the Centre for Human Rights and in cooperation with UNESCO, to carry out the survey on human rights education and prepare the preliminary report provided for in the Plan of Action as soon as possible, and to convene, at the appropriate time, the international planning conference for the Decade.

### D. Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education

12. The Plan of Action submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session was the result of extensive consultations with the Commission on Human Rights, Member States, human rights treaty bodies, the specialized agencies, other appropriate bodies, and competent NGOs which had been carried out by the Centre for Human Rights. 4/ The Plan of Action has five objectives: the assessment of needs and formulation of strategies; building and strengthening human rights education programmes; developing educational material; strengthening the mass media; and global dissemination of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Plan focuses on stimulating and supporting national and local activities and initiatives and is built upon the idea of a partnership between Governments, international organizations, NGOs, professional associations, individuals and large segments of civil society.

## II. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

### A. Publicizing and seeking support for the Plan of Action

13. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights attaches special importance to that part of his mandate entrusting him with coordinating relevant United Nations education and public information programmes in the field of human rights. The resolutions of the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights relating to the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education and the Plan of Action place specific responsibilities on the High Commissioner and the Centre for Human Rights in the implementation of the Plan of Action. It has been a principal objective of the High Commissioner to mobilize widespread support for the Decade and the carrying out of the activities foreseen under the Plan of Action. For that purpose a pamphlet containing the Plan of Action and succinct background information has been prepared for wide distribution.

14. The High Commissioner, during his visits to countries, emphasizes the importance of human rights education and encourages national initiatives within the framework of the Plan of Action. The High Commissioner took part in the discussion on human rights and education organized by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and has met with the Independent Commission on Human Rights Education in New York. The High Commissioner also addressed the meeting of IUS PRIMI VIRI, held in Rome in October 1994, on the proclamation of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education.

15. In order to generate support for the Decade at the highest levels of government, the High Commissioner addressed letters to the Heads of State or Government of Member States and observer States of the United Nations. In his letters, the High Commissioner stated his belief that an investment today in human rights education would be repaid many times in the future in stronger, more prosperous and peaceful societies and achieving that noble goal would require leadership, in particular from the highest levels of government. The High Commissioner also sought support for establishing national committees for human rights education, as focal points for Decade activities; he asked that achievable goals be set and that the intellectual and material resources necessary to reach them be provided. Notes verbales were also addressed to all Governments drawing their attention to General Assembly resolution 49/184 and Commission for Human Rights resolution 1995/47, and soliciting comments with a view to supplementing the Plan of Action. In addition, attention was drawn to the Commission's specific requests to Governments to consider in particular, in accordance with national conditions, the establishment of a national focal point for human rights education, the development and implementation of an action-oriented national plan for human rights education and the creation of a national resource and training centre for human rights education, as foreseen in the Plan of Action. No suggestions were received for supplementing the Plan of Action.

16. The High Commissioner also addressed letters to United Nations specialized agencies and programmes, regional intergovernmental organizations, human rights treaty bodies, institutes of research, the United Nations University and other organizations, transmitting the Plan of Action, encouraging each organization or body to contribute to achieving the Plan's objectives and seeking to establish a solid basis for cooperation. In the High Commissioner's view, progress in promoting human rights education would depend in large measure on the strength of the partnership that could be built up between all those interested in promoting human rights education.

17. The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights addressed letters to NGOs drawing their attention to the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights relating to the Decade, and inviting them to submit proposals for the implementation of the Decade.

## B. Information on current activities

### 1. States

18. The Governments of Italy and South Africa have provided information illustrating activities undertaken at the national level in the framework of the Decade.

19. The Government of Italy pointed out two initiatives that it had taken. First, in December 1993, the country had hosted the European Conference to Launch the Decade for Human Rights Education, held in Rome in December 1993, with a view to sharing experience at the European level; the proceedings of the Conference were published in 1995. Secondly, the Government had promoted the publication of an "Enquiry on the teaching and information concerning human rights in Italy" conducted by the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, which had been completed in 1994. The "Enquiry" contains an analysis of the way in which teaching and information concerning human rights are carried out in Italy at all levels of schools and universities and in the various professional categories.

20. The Government of South Africa described its action plan to combat racial prejudice and racial discrimination; it affirmed that the full resources of the nation's educational system would be mobilized in support of the practice of fundamental rights, freedoms and responsibilities, and the Ministry of Education would become associated with the Commission on Human Rights to establish a human rights culture in the country. The Government also described the general legislative measures taken to eliminate racial discrimination in education, the special measures taken to ensure equality and to help the economically disadvantaged, and pointed out its commitment to the goal of providing access to general education for all children, funded by the State at an acceptable level of quality.

### 2. United Nations Secretariat

#### (a) Centre for Human Rights

21. As envisaged in the Plan of Action, the Centre for Human Rights is increasing its involvement in human rights education through its information programme, including the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights, and through the Programme of Advisory Services and Technical Assistance in the Field of Human Rights. The activities undertaken under the two programmes are described in some detail in the reports of the Secretary-General to the Commission on Human Rights on the development of public information activities in the field of human rights, including the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights, 5/ and on advisory services in the field of human rights. 6/

22. Detailed information about the activities of the Centre for Human Rights for the promotion of human rights education was also provided extensively in the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on the preparation of a plan of action for a United Nations decade for human rights education. 7/

(b) Department of Public Information

23. The United Nations Department of Public Information is planning a number of activities to raise public awareness of basic human rights, to provide and broaden substantive knowledge of key human rights issues and to mobilize greater support for action to promote human rights worldwide by Governments and NGOs. It will continue to produce printed material on human rights (brochures, fact-sheets, United Nations documents, etc.) which is distributed worldwide to the media, NGOs and the public in general in a variety of languages through the network of the 67 United Nations information centres and services, and electronically through the Internet. Within the context of the Decade, the Department will issue, before the end of 1995, an illustrated wall chart "United Nations and Human Rights", a concise brochure describing the United Nations human rights mechanisms, and an illustrated poster/brochure containing the text of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

24. Information about the role of the United Nations and its activities is also disseminated through radio and television programmes produced regularly by the Department in a variety of languages. In this respect, several "UN in Action" television programmes produced for the CNN World Report (in English and in additional languages for wider distribution) featured issues related to human rights. Radio documentaries will also be developed throughout the Decade, as part of the regular 15-minute weekly radio series the Department produces in 15 languages. Press conferences, briefing, seminars and round tables are other activities organized by the Department to inform the media about the work of the United Nations. For instance, on 9 December 1994, to launch the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, the Department, in collaboration with the Centre for Human Rights, organized a panel discussion at Headquarters on human rights issues, with the participation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. A round table for journalists on the role of the United Nations and emerging human rights issues will be organized at Headquarters in connection with the General Assembly's discussion of human rights questions in November 1995.

25. With regard to future activities in the framework of the Decade, the Department suggested that it could produce educational videos and study guides on human rights themes for use in primary, secondary schools and universities; it could collaborate with the Centre for Human Rights in the implementation of the Decade at the local level, in particular in schools, through coordinated action of the United Nations information centres and services, which will also be asked to conduct a survey of existing printed local language versions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Finally, the Department will continue to publish the Declaration in local and indigenous languages, and other human rights material, such as the revised version of the publication Human Rights: Questions and Answers. 8/

### 3. Human rights treaty bodies

#### (a) Chairpersons meeting

26. During their sixth meeting, held in Geneva from 18 to 22 September 1995, the chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies drew attention to the importance of their contribution to the Decade. In that regard, the chairpersons recommended that each treaty body, in its examination of State reports, assiduously investigate compliance by States parties with obligations regarding education and the provision of public information on human rights. They affirmed that they should, inter alia, inquire as to whether in States parties the translation and dissemination of human rights instruments had been promoted and whether satisfactory training programmes for public officials had been put in place. The chairpersons also recommended that treaty bodies elaborate reporting guidelines and offer to individual States concrete suggestions on the implementation of the obligations they had assumed regarding education and the provision of public information on human rights.

#### (b) Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

27. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination considered the Plan of Action for the decade during its forty-sixth session in March 1995 and adopted a contribution to the Decade. 9/ The Committee stated that it would continue to monitor the implementation of article 7 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which dealt with education. The Committee also pointed out that there were certain features of racial discrimination which were specific to it, such as the dissemination of doctrines of racial superiority, and expressed its belief that teaching about racial discrimination could be presented as part of teaching about discrimination in general, including discrimination on other grounds. The Committee also supported the proposals in the Plan of Action for information campaigns and popular education, and stated that education in human rights would best be arranged within institutes of law and political science. The Committee further supported training for the occupational groups listed in the Plan of Action and stated that it inquired about such training during its consideration of State party reports. It also drew attention to its general recommendation XIII concerning the training of law enforcement officials, and general recommendation XVII on the establishment of national institutions to facilitate the implementation of the Convention.

#### (c) Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

28. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the treaty body responsible for the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, devoted its day of general discussion of its eleventh session (December 1994) to human rights education. The discussion was attended by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and participants from State parties, treaty bodies, other United Nations organs and specialized agencies and various international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The participants informed the Committee members of the action being undertaken by their organizations in the field of human rights education. The need for concerted action in promoting human rights

education was emphasized and the idea of launching a United Nations decade for human rights was fully supported. The important role that treaty-based bodies, and in particular the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, could play in monitoring implementation of recommendations related to human rights education, was emphasized. It was suggested that the human rights education component be integrated into relevant programmes of specialized agencies and the United Nations organs, so that they could play a more active role in promoting, through human rights education, universal culture of human rights. The Committee decided to defer until its thirteenth session, to be held in November 1995, adoption of its conclusions from the day of general discussion.

(d) Committee on the Rights of the Child

29. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, in its dialogue with States Parties, deals with the articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child relating to education. In recent concluding observations, the Committee has drawn attention to the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education encouraging the State Party concerned to consider using that opportunity to promote the incorporation of education about the Convention in curricula for schoolchildren, it being understood that the children would be taught about their rights by suitably trained and qualified teachers.

## 4. United Nations specialized agencies and programmes

### (a) United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

30. In view of the survey to be undertaken by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on existing human rights programmes and initiatives at the international, regional and national levels, UNESCO noted that since 1986 it had had a permanent system of reporting on steps taken by Member States to apply the Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Paris, 1974). National reports were submitted every six years on the basis of a questionnaire that should include questions concerning human rights education. According to UNESCO, the questionnaire might serve as an advance survey on existing human rights programmes and initiatives to be carried out in the framework of the Decade.

31. UNESCO underlined two tools in its sphere of competence which could be useful in the framework of the Decade:

(a) The Declaration and Draft Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy proposed by the Ministers of Education of the UNESCO member States at the forty-fourth session of the International Conference on Education (Geneva, October 1994), to be considered by the General Conference of UNESCO at its twenty-eighth session (Paris, October-November 1995).

(b) The UNESCO Advisory Committee on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy established in 1995, responsible for following up, promoting and supervising the implementation of the World Plan of Action on Education for

Human Rights and Democracy (Montreal, 1993) and the Declaration and Draft Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy. The first session of the Committee (Paris, April 1995), composed of experts, was of the opinion that a compilation of all policy documents in the field of education, including the Plan of Action for the Decade and the contribution of UNESCO to the Decade, should be monitored systematically and comprehensively.

32. UNESCO has recently prepared teaching and guiding materials, including the "International practical guide on the implementation of the UNESCO Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms", the manuscript of an "Educational Art Booklet on Human Rights", "Guidelines and criteria for the evaluation and revision of curricula, textbooks and other educational materials from the viewpoint of international education", "La culture démocratique: un défi pour les écoles", and "A new partnership: indigenous people and the United Nations system". The organization is planning to prepare, for the biennium 1996-1997, a classroom manual for primary and secondary schools.

33. Finally, UNESCO underlined the importance of its two educational networks, i.e. the Associated Schools Project (which promotes the introduction of human rights in school curricula and teacher-training programmes, and included, in September 1995, more than 3,200 institutions in 124 countries) and the International Textbook Research Network, aimed at promoting exchanges of innovative experiences in textbook research in order to improve the textbooks from the viewpoint of peace, human rights, intercultural dialogue, tolerance and democracy. In September 1995, the Network included more than 200 participating institutions from all regions of the world. A third network, of human rights chairs at the university level, is currently being established.

(b) World Bank

34. In its response, the World Bank pointed out that it considered education to be one of its strategic priorities, since it was a crucial means of enabling the poor both to contribute to development and to take advantage of the opportunities that development created. Within that framework, human rights education was important to make people aware of their rights and learn to respect the rights of others. Therefore, the World Bank supported the goals and the guiding principles of the Decade and was prepared to support the efforts of those member countries that would seek the Bank's assistance in implementing them. It also welcomed the call in the Plan of Action for more systematic coordination among specialized agencies, regional organizations, national institutions and NGOs, and the assignment of that responsibility to the High Commissioner; coordinated international action in the area of human rights education would result in more effective assistance to individual countries without weakening their sense of "ownership" of curricula reforms.

(c) United Nations Development Programme

35. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) stated that it had included human rights in its training at all levels, and was preparing a study on the

contribution of UNDP development work to the promotion of all human rights, to be used to further sensitize its staff, as well as its development partners, to human rights issues. It envisaged that over the next few years its work would concentrate on poverty eradication, in order to assist countries in their efforts to achieve social development. UNDP was also working for gender equality and, through policy and programme support, was actively supporting the rights of indigenous people. Finally, even if the limited material and human resources would not allow UNDP to make central funds available for the Decade, it would be able to respond directly to national concerns, to raise specific issues and to mobilize funds at the national level through its country offices. Their attention would be drawn to the objectives of the Decade, and resident representatives would be invited to seek opportunities to promote those objectives through the ongoing work of UNDP.

(d) United Nations Children's Fund

36. In connection with the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) stated that its advocacy programme for the promotion of the Convention on the Rights of the Child incorporated the education of young people as an important component. Experience with that programme had determined that involving children and young people in learning about their rights necessitated the development of a sound educational strategy for teaching and learning that not only introduced the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other human rights, to young people but showed how it applied to their lives. The Education for Development Section of UNICEF addressed concerns about human rights education that were common to both industrialized and developing countries. By supporting and providing technical assistance to the 38 national committees of UNICEF and an increasing number of its field offices, the following strategies were pursued:

(i) Promotion of the Convention, while broadening thinking to the concept of human rights generally;

(ii) Emphasis on educational strategies which help children appreciate the relevance of human rights issues - child rights in particular - to their own lives and own communities. (It was discovered that many existing materials on human rights tended to focus on the concerns of children in other parts of the world rather than drawing on the immediate experience of the child and the situation in their own country. That tendency could reinforce the very stereotypes that education for development was attempting to lessen.);

(iii) Identification of strategies for developing skills and attitudes of personal commitment which assist young people to become actively involved in rights issues in their own communities.

37. As part of that strategy, UNICEF was conducting a number of training-of-trainers workshops to familiarize educators with those approaches and had also developed prototype material which emphasized methodology as well as content in teaching about human rights. That material was currently being adapted to suit different situations and cultures around the world. Further, a communication

network of educators and others involved in human rights and child rights was being established, facilitating the exchange of experiences and ideas.

38. Human rights education must permeate the ethos of the whole school or educational institution. The impact made by a teacher striving to sensitize young people in human rights and justice issues was considerably diluted if the wider context of the school in which they operated was excessively authoritarian, if the discipline was cruel and harmful, or if the participation of children and young people was discouraged. One contribution which UNICEF was planning to make to the Decade was the preparation of a discussion paper (in the form of a "ladder") which would explore the application of a child rights approach to the wider educational processes.

(e) United Nations Institute for Training and Research

39. In its response, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) affirmed that it made efforts to include modules on human rights in the training programmes which were organized regularly for members of the permanent missions to the United Nations at Geneva, New York and Vienna. In January 1995, UNITAR had organized the first briefing on the Commission on Human Rights for Geneva-based diplomats, in close cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. In addition, lectures on human rights formed an integral part of the United Nations/UNITAR Fellowship Programme in International Law, which was addressed to mid-level government officials and university lecturers and took place at The Hague on an annual basis. Finally, the Institute indicated that it had very recently embarked on a research project regarding training in the field of the human rights of women.

(f) United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

40. The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) affirmed that progress in the field of human rights often depended upon achievements in social development generally. Therefore, its contribution to the Plan of Action would seek to highlight that key issue. The Institute envisaged its contribution to the Decade through several specific activities:

(i) By making available to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the publications that impinged directly upon the themes of the Decade, which could serve as background material for training courses or as inputs to the preparation of training manuals by the Centre for Human Rights. The Institute made reference, for instance, to the publications relating to the UNRISD projects on "Ethnic conflict and development", "Ethnic diversity and public policy", "Rebuilding war-torn societies", "The social consequences of the peace process in Cambodia", "Technical cooperation and women's lives", and "Volunteer contributions to social integration in cities";

(ii) By assisting in the development of the planned activities on human rights education at the national and local levels, through the national researchers and social activists collaborating with UNRISD in the field;

(iii) By offering UNRISD comments on the preliminary, mid-term and final reports to be prepared by the High Commissioner and by participating in the international conferences planned to support those reports.

5. Non-governmental organizations and institutions

41. Several non-governmental organizations and institutions forwarded information about their activities in the framework of the Decade. Some underlined the themes they had been dealing with through educational activities, such as the situations of extreme poverty (International Movement ATD Fourth World), women's issues and gender equality (World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations), universality of the concept of human rights, right to education and banning of child labour (World Confederation of Labour) and safe motherhood (International Confederation of Midwives). The World Young Women's Christian Association stressed the need to tailor training programmes to specific target groups, such as State bureaucracy dealing with the administration of justice and law enforcement, politicians, the private sector and civil society. The International Save the Children Alliance focused on the production of educational material (a training kit on the Convention on the Rights of the Child), and the Netherlands Institute of Human Rights and the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims, on training courses (respectively, on human rights for legal practitioners and on ethics and torture for law enforcement and health professionals) and related materials. Materials have also been received from various organizations; among them, a useful annotated human rights education bibliography published by the Open Society Institute.

## III. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

42. The Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education provides for a number of specific activities in the immediate future to stimulate and provide a framework for activities at the regional, national and local levels. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights will focus attention on encouraging States to set up national committees for human rights education with broad-based participation, to develop and implement action-oriented plans for human rights education and to create national resource and training centres for human rights education, as foreseen in the Plan of Action. The High Commissioner and the Centre for Human Rights will develop a programme of technical cooperation to support State initiatives in these and other areas of the Plan of Action.

43. The following activities are planned for the short term.

1. International consultation on the relevance of education theories and practices to human rights education.

44. The Government of Costa Rica has decided to organize an international consultation to consider the relevance of educational theories and practices to human rights education. This is seen as a contribution to the development of human rights education methodologies and practices under the Plan of Action for the Decade. At the request of the Government of Costa Rica, the High

Commissioner has decided to provide financial assistance for this consultation through the programme of advisory services and technical cooperation in the field of human rights administered by the Centre for Human Rights.

2. Survey on existing human rights education programmes and initiatives.

45. The High Commissioner, with the assistance of the Centre for Human Rights, is preparing, in cooperation with UNESCO, a preliminary survey on human rights education programmes, initiatives and materials existing at the international, regional and national levels. A questionnaire will be sent to States, international and regional organizations, specialized agencies and programmes, NGOs, professional associations and research institutes. Each State will be requested to designate a national focal point for the Decade, which will assist in the carrying out of the survey at the national level and in the subsequent drawing up of a national plan of action for human rights education. According to the Plan of Action, such focal points might consist of specially constituted committees, including representatives of relevant government agencies, NGOs, the private sector and educators; alternatively, existing appropriate structures or organizations, such as ombudsman offices, national human rights commissions, or national human rights training and research institutes, might be designated to perform this function. On the basis of this survey, an international planning conference on the Decade will be organized to develop detailed plans for human rights education at the international level and guidelines for the development of action-oriented plans at the national level.

3. Survey of existing versions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

46. The High Commissioner and the Centre for Human Rights, in cooperation with UNESCO and the Department of Public Information, will conduct a global survey of existing versions of the Declaration in printed, pictorial, audiovisual and other formats. On the basis of this survey, a plan for the development of further material will be developed.

4. Establishment of a media advisory board.

47. The High Commissioner and the Centre for Human Rights, with the cooperation of the Department of Public Information, will establish a media advisory board for public information and education on human rights, in order to develop a mass media campaign to publicize human rights standards and mechanisms.

* * *

48. The Centre for Human Rights, under the overall policy guidance of the High Commissioner, will continue and enhance its activities related to programme development in formal and non-formal education and to technical cooperation in this area.

49. The Plan of Action focuses its activities on the national and local levels but foresees an international role of promotion, coordination and support, in particular by the High Commissioner and the Centre for Human Rights. This will require resources to ensure coordination, cooperation and follow-up on the international level, carry out the survey, prepare and hold the international

conference, expand the availability of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and establish and support the media advisory board. Further, resources will have to be made available to support national initiatives through the programme of advisory services and technical cooperation in the field of human rights.

Notes

1/ Resolution 1993/56 of 9 March 1993.

2/ A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), paras. 33-34 and (Part II), paras. 78-82.

3/ A/49/261/Add.1, annex.

4/ See E/CN.4/1994/39 and A/49/261 and Add.1.

5/ E/CN.4/1995/46 and Add.1.

6/ E/CN.4/1995/89.

7/ A/49/261/Add.1, paras. 58-113.

8/ DPI/919.

9/ See the report of the Committee (Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 18) (A/50/18), annex III.

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